

**PVTA
Pioneer
Valley
Transit
Authority**

**Administrative Headquarters
Old North Main St. Firehouse
2808 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01107
(413) 732-6248**

**MINUTES OF PVTA'S
PARATRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING
March 15, 2016**

The Paratransit Committee meeting of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority was held on Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority Office located at 2808 Main Street in Springfield, MA, at 11:00 A.M.

ATTENDANCE

PRESENT:

Carolyn Brennan, East Longmeadow; Mark Gold, Longmeadow; Paula Dubord, Wilbraham; Brian O'Leary, Belchertown; Marilyn Ishler, South Hadley; Paul Burns Johnson, Palmer; Becky Moriarty, Hampden; Steve Huntley, Chicopee

Other's Present: Mary MacInnes, PVTA; Josh Rickman, PVTA; Brandy Lamour, PVTA; Price Armstrong, PVTA; Robin St. Amand, PVTA; Paul Anziano, Hulmes Transportation; David Elvin, PVPC;

NOT PRESENT:

Richard Theroux, Agawam;

A quorum being present, Chairperson of the Paratransit Committee, Carolyn Brennan, called the Paratransit Committee meeting to order at 11:02 A.M.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 22, 2016

Chairperson Brennan asked for a motion from the Committee to approve the Paratransit meeting minutes held on February 22, 2016.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Gold/O'Leary) to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2016 Paratransit Committee Meeting.

Chairperson Brennan asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for all those in favor to say aye.

Motion passed by a unanimous vote.

2. ON TIME PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS FOR PARATRANSIT SERVICE

Josh Rickman, Manager of Planning and Operations reported the following on-time performance improvement options for paratransit service:

Based on van ridership trends during the past three years, PVRTA estimates that an additional 18,000 passengers (14%) will use PVRTA's ADA and senior "Dial-a-Ride" van services in FY16. The majority of the growth in van ridership to date is coming from the senior population. The overall increase in van ridership is reducing the on-time performance of trips for the ADA passengers, which are the majority of all van trips. PVRTA must provide service to all ADA-qualified individuals, as mandated by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for fixed route providers. Federal law requires that ADA van service must not display any capacity constraints.

On-time performance of PVRTA's ADA van service is now ranging from 85% to 90% each month, which is below the contractual goal of 95% that PVRTA has set with its van service contractor Hulmes Transportation. This lack of compliance with the terms of the contract could be identified as a capacity constraint for ADA passengers, which exposes PVRTA to a potential finding of noncompliance by FTA that puts PVRTA's federal reimbursements for ADA service at risk.

PVRTA has developed six options (three of which have alternatives within them) for addressing the on-time performance problem with van services. These options focus on adjustments to the Senior Dial-a-Ride service, as changes to ADA service are not permitted under federal regulations. All of the options and alternatives shown below will make no change to ADA service.

1. No Change to Service Delivery
2. Reducing Senior Van Service Hours (with alternative)
3. Eliminating Regional Trips (with alternative)
4. Providing Medical Trips only (with alternative)
5. Hybrid Option 1 and 2
6. Expand Senior Van Service

Included after the six options are additional items that can be combined with any proposed option. This includes a pilot program for council on aging's (COA) to be subsidized by PVRTA to provide senior transportation for their senior population, a van donation and maintenance program for participating COA's in the Pilot program.

The main purpose of this effort is to improve the on-time performance of PVRTA demand response service. PVRTA has an obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act to provide demand response service that meets on-time performance targets; missing on-time performance goals opens up PVRTA to lawsuits and the possibility of federal action.

Option 1: No change to service delivery. Make no changes to the existing method for delivery of services for senior passengers. The expected result of no change:

- Increased potential for exposing PVRTA to a lawsuit that would allege Title VI violation because the on-time performance of the service for protected class of individuals (ADA passengers) is not comparable to that of able-bodied passengers using the fixed route service.
- Likelihood of increased complaints for both Senior and ADA service and potential ADA complaints filed with the FTA.
- Increased risk of poor publicity about PVRTA service generally, and van service in particular.

- Increased potential for exposure to lawsuit for injury to ADA or senior service passengers who are not picked up on time and/or may be injured while waiting for long periods, especially in cold weather conditions.

Option 2: Reduce senior dial-a-ride service hours. Provide senior van service from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, Monday through Friday (reduced from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM)

- Benefit to on time performance: Providing service between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM avoids most conflicts with peak hour demand for ADA trips, which is from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM. This option avoids serving both ADA and senior passengers during peak hours
- Service delivery: Senior van service would be provided as currently operated with the exception to service hours (six hours per day, down from eight and a half hours per day). Senior van riders would not be able to book a pick up earlier than 9:00 AM and could not book a drop off later than 3:00 PM on weekdays.
- Service area limitations: None. Passengers can travel to any other PVTA member community, as they do now.
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVTA pays a flat fee to Hulmes for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM, so there would be no adjustment in contract or financial terms.
- Impact to driver deployment: Hulmes currently deploys a number of split shift or part time drivers. Some shifts would need to be analyzed to ensure enough coverage is provided with the additional trips expected between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM.
- Comparison to current service: Service would start one hour later in the morning and end 1.5 hours earlier in the evening. Total service hours would be thirty for the week compared to the current forty two and a half provided.

Option 2 Alternative: Service 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Monday through Saturday. Provide senior van service from 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM, Monday through Saturday.

- Benefit to on time performance: Providing service between 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM would avoid all conflicts with peak hour demand of ADA which is from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 2:30 to 4:30 PM. Senior van service would be instituted for the first time on Saturdays.
- Service delivery: Senior van service would be provided as currently constituted with the exception of service hours. Senior van riders could not book a pick up for earlier than 9:30 AM and could not book a drop off later than 2:30 PM on weekdays.
- Service area limitations: None. Passengers can travel to any other PVTA member community.
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM (including Saturdays).
- Impact to driver deployment: Hulmes currently deploys a number of split shift or part time drivers. Some shifts would need to be analyzed to ensure enough coverage is provided with the additional trips expected between 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM (this analysis would include Saturday).

- Comparison to current service: Service would start 1.5 hours later in the morning and end two hours earlier in the evening. Total service hours would be thirty for the week compared to the current forty two and a half provided.

Option 3: Eliminate senior service regional trips. Provide senior van service from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday and restrict trips to and from destinations in-town or to abutting communities. Regional trips would continue to be provided to communities with no fixed route service (Hampden and Pelham).

- Benefit to on time performance: Limiting the geographic distance of trips will increase efficiency by improving the fleet's trips per revenue hour. The longer the distance of travel the less likely the trip can be combined with other passenger trips. This service will also mirror other provider's standard for senior van service delivery.
- Service delivery: Senior van service would be provided as currently constituted with the exception of regional trips (non abutting communities).
- Service area limitations: No trips to communities that do not directly abutt the origin community.
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVRTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Impact to driver deployment: Minimal.
- Comparison to current service: In town and abutting community trips comprise 82% of all Senior Van service according to statistics from January 1, 2015 through December 31st of 2015. The remaining 18% would not be served under this proposal.

Option 3 Alternative: Regional trips only for medical. Provide senior van service from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday and restrict trips to destinations in town or abutting communities with the exception of regional medical trips. Regional trips would be provided to communities with no fixed route service (Hampden and Pelham).

- Days/Time of Service: Service would provided Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
- Benefit to On Time Performance: Limiting the geographic distance of trips will increase efficiency by improving the fleet's trips per revenue hour. The longer the distance of travel the less likely the trip can be combined with other passenger trips. This service will also mirror the many other providers standard for senior van service delivery. This alternative option retains medical trips to regional locations.
- Service delivery: Senior van service would be provided as currently constituted with the exception of regional trips.
- Service area limitations: No trips to communities that do not directly abut the origin community unless it is for a medical trip
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVRTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Impact to driver deployment: Minimal.
- Comparison to current service: In town and abutting community trips comprise 82% of all senior van service according to statistics from January 1, 2015 through December 31, 2015. Half of senior van trips are for medical trips, it is expected that at least 9% of the regional trips would continue to be served. The total reduction would be approximately 10,000 trips.

Option 4: Senior service medical trips only. Senior van service trip purposes would be for medical trips only. Service would be provided from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

- Benefit to On Time Performance: This would limit the trip purpose to only medical trips reducing the number of senior trips PVRTA provides. Approximately half of all trips are for medical purposes. This would reduce PVRTA total transportation of senior's in half.
- Service delivery: Senior van service would only be for medical trip purposes.
- Service area limitations: Passengers can travel to any other PVRTA member community.
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVRTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Impact to driver deployment: Minimal.
- Comparison to current service: The number of senior trips would be cut approximately in half. PVRTA would provide approximately 41,000 trips annual on the senior van service according to trip data from January 1, 2015 to December 31 2015.

Option 4 Alternative: Senior van service for medical and shopping only. Only van service trip purpose would be for medical trips and shopping trips. Service would be provided from 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

- Benefit to on time performance: This would limit the trip purpose to only medical trips and shopping trips reducing the number of trips PVRTA provides. Approximately half of all trips are for medical purposes while 1/3 of trips are for shopping purposes. This would reduce PVRTA total transportation of senior in by 1/6.
- Service delivery: Senior van service would only be for medical and shopping trip purposes (verification of these trip purposes would be difficult or impossible for reservationists to document).
- Service area limitations: Passengers can travel to any other PVRTA member community.
- Financial impact: Minimal. PVRTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Impact to driver deployment: Minimal.
- Comparison to current service: The number of senior trips would be cut by 1/6. PVRTA would provide approximately 68,500 trips annual on the senior van service according to trip data from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

Option 5: Hybrid of options one and two. Provide senior van service from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM and restrict regional trip purpose only for medical trips.

- Benefit: This hybrid approach combines both the benefits of option one and two. Providing service between 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM avoids most conflicts with peak hour demand of ADA which is from 7:00 AM to 9:00 AM and 2:30 PM to 4:30 PM. This avoids transportation of both ADA and senior passengers during the peak hour, which prevents a domino effect of OTP throughout the early to mid day. Limiting the geographic distance of trips will increase efficiency by improving the fleet's trips per revenue hour. The longer the distance of travel the less likely the trip can be combined with other passenger trips. This service will also mirror the many other providers standard for senior van service delivery
- Service delivery: Senior van service would be provided with reduced service hours and limiting regional trip purpose to only medical purposes.
- Service area limitations: No trips to communities that do not directly abut the origin community unless it is for a medical trip.

- Financial impact: Minimal. PVTA pays a flat fee for trips between 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM
- Impact to driver deployment: Minimal.
- Comparison to current service: Service would start an hour later in the morning and end 1.5 hours earlier in the evening. Total service hours would be 30 for the week compared to the current 42.5 provided. On a whole, in town and abutting community trips comprise 82% of all senior van service according from statistics from January 1, 2015 through December 31 of 2015. The remaining 9% would not be served under this proposal. The total reduction would be approximately 13,000 trips

Option 6: Increase funding, no service changes. Identify the additional vehicles, garage requirements, staffing, and associated contractor costs and source(s) of revenue required to attain minimum 90% on-time performance and maintain current service levels through next five years. Reduce van contractor's contractual on-time performance goal from 95% to 90%.

- Service Delivery: Service would be provided as currently constituted with improved on-time performance and reduced complaints for Senior and ADA services.
- Service Area limitations: None. Passengers can travel to any other PVTA member community, as they do currently.
- Financial Impact: PVTA would need to procure additional vans to operate the service. PVTA and Hulmes would need to renegotiate the flat rate paid to Hulmes as the Annual Revenue Hours would exceed 190,000 hours. Hulmes would need to hire and retain additional drivers. PVTA would need to expand maintenance staff to keep fleet in state of good repair. Current Hulmes property in Chicopee may not have sufficient parking for new fleet size.
- Impact to driver deployment: Additional drivers would be needed.
- Comparison to Current Service: No change to the current service.

Additional Options

- COA subsidy: Selected COAs would receive a subsidy based on their FY16 Senior Van Trip Ridership. The subsidy would pay \$10 per trip. Upon receipt of the funds, the municipality would become responsible for transportation of their senior residents. PVTA would not pick up any town residents for in town, our out of town trips. PVTA would need to cap the subsidy to communities at \$100,000 for the pilot period.
- Useful life van donation. Participating COAs would be given vans that have reached the end of their useful life.
- Map Van. PVTA would continue to support communities wanting to request vans through the MAP program.
- Van maintenance. For participating COAs providing senior van transportation, PVTA would offer a maintenance program. During the pilot, PVTA would maintain the vehicles at no cost to the COA.
- Curtail senior day health center ridership. This option presents a number of challenges, including the following:
 1. PVTA is obligated by federal law to serve all trip requests made by PVTA's ADA customers.

2. Due to the eligibility requirements of the Adult Day Health Centers, it is likely that all PVTA customers currently being transported to those facilities in the senior van service program are also ADA eligible. Any effort to reduce senior van service levels would probably serve only to shift them to ADA service, and not actually address the ridership problem.
3. PVTA could try to tighten available restrictions for trips to Adult Day Health Centers, such as strictly enforcing the ¾ mile rule. However, this would be logistically difficult during reservations to have a separate service area for Adult Day Health Centers.
4. PVTA is dependent on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to compel the Adult Day Health Centers to enter into a service agreement for these agency trips. Thus far, DHHS has been difficult to engage on this topic.

Brian O'Leary made the motion to adopt option two.

Motion: Moved and seconded (O'Leary/Ishler) to adopt option two.

Chairperson Brennan asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for all those in favor to say aye.

Vote: 2 in favor, 5 opposed.

Motion failed.

Paul Burns Johnson made the motion to adopt option six for FY17 budget.

Motion: Moved and seconded (Burns Johnson/Huntley) made the motion to adopt option six for FY17 budget.

Chairperson Brennan asked if there was any discussion, hearing none, asked for all those in favor to say aye.

Vote: 3 in favor, 4 opposed.

Motion failed.

Chairperson Brennan stated it seems the consensus of the committee is that there is still additional information needed in order to make a decision. Ms. Brennan asked the committee to send any requests for information, comments, questions, directly to Mr. Rickman by Friday so there is time to prepare a response before our next meeting.

Mr. Burns Johnson stated he needs to see financials to be able to make a decision.

Ms. Brennan stated that she would like to see more information on the impact of the 2:30 PM return trip as well as service 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM with addition of medical trips at regular hours of service for seniors.

Chairperson Brennan scheduled the next Paratransit Committee meeting for Tuesday, March 29th at 1:00 PM at PVTA.

3. OTHER BUSINESS

Chairperson Brennan reported that there was no other business to discuss.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Paratransit Committee Meeting adjourned (Burns Johnson/Huntley) at 1:11 PM.

A TRUE RECORD

ATTEST:


BRANDY LAMOUR

Documents filed with Paratransit Committee Meeting packet:

- Paratransit Meeting Minutes of February 22, 2016
- On-Time Performance Improvement Option handouts

MINUTES APPROVED MARCH 29, 2016